ARTICLES

# Echoes Past: Le the “Ro Formula

“The only thir learn from his learn nothing — Georg Heg

July 25, 2024 · 1

Roman Formula, Echoes of ...

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Hidden within history are lessons that today’s society must not ignore. For centuries, a strategy has been employed to suppress and persecute entire groups of people, enabling the unchecked destruction of any organization, even to the point of the physical elimination of its members. This so-called

"**Roman formula**" was introduced by Professor Massimo Introvigne and officially recognized by the OSCE in 2011. From ancient Rome to Nazi Germany, the application of this strategy has led to indescribable human suffering and tragedy. In our time, we continue to face the consequences of these relentless methods. It is crucial for all of us to see and recognize their impact before they lead to new tragedies.

Massimo Introvigne, Managing Director of the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR), delivered a keynote speech at the OSCE conference "Stepping Up Efforts to Prevent and Combat Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians, Focusing on Hate Crimes, Exclusion, Marginalization, and Denial of Rights" in Vienna on May 18, 2015.

For the most part, people are unaware of such a strategy's existence; however, in certain circles, it is known as an effective method for discrediting and systematically persecuting social, political, or religious groups. This formula,

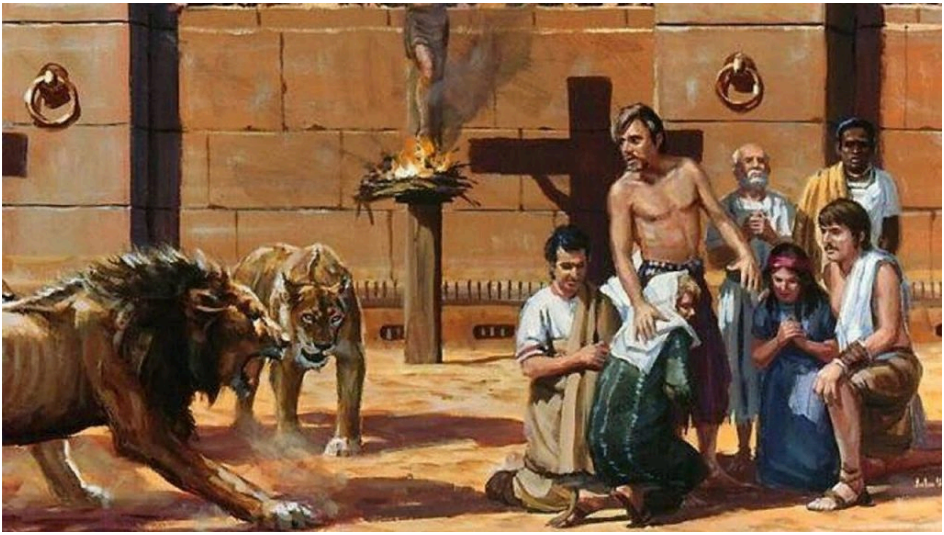
developed in ancient Rome, has been refined over centuries: it was used against early Christians, during the “holy” Inquisition, and by the fascist regime of Nazi Germany. The “Roman formula” consists of three phases: intolerance, discrimination, and persecution.

Let’s take a brief look through history and examine this formula’s application through some of its most striking examples.

In ancient Rome, the early Christians were the first victims of this strategy. In the initial phase — intolerance — people practicing Christianity were declared enemies of the state, attributed with absurd and sinister characteristics. Officials claimed that Christians engaged in acts of cannibalism, disregarded the Roman gods, and plotted evil against the Empire.

In the second phase — discrimination — Christians were excluded from public life, forbidden from engaging in certain activities, and persecuted at a legal level.

In the final phase — persecution — Christians were thrown to wild beasts in arenas, crucified, or executed in other brutal ways.



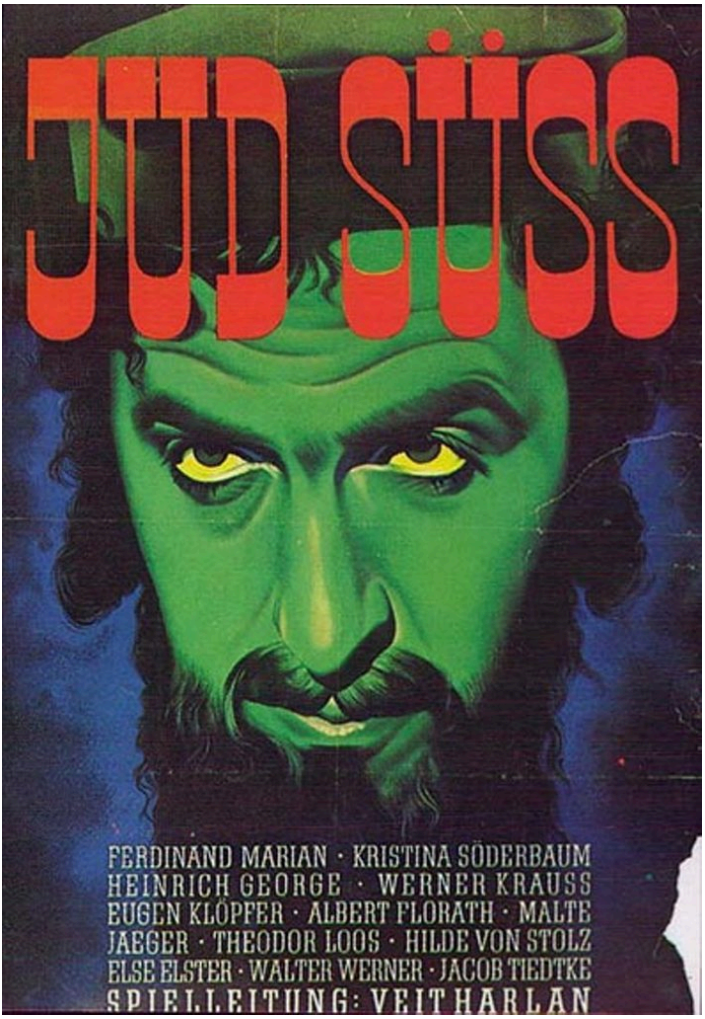
The painting “Christian Martyrs in the Colosseum”

Nazi Germany also employed the “Roman formula” to persecute Jews, leading to one of the most horrific crimes in human history — the Holocaust. This three-stage formula was executed with terrifying efficiency and German precision.

The first stage, “intolerance,” involved creating and spreading a negative image of Jews. Under the direction of Joseph Goebbels, Nazi propaganda launched a massive campaign to portray Jews as enemies of the state. This included caricatures, articles, and films such as “Jud Süss,” which depicted Jews as dangerous, cunning, and malevolent characters threatening German society. As a result, many people in Germany and abroad, where the film was shown, began to genuinely believe

that Jews were spying on them, hunting their children, and planning to kill them.

This film became a tool for the Nazis to establish a system of


JUD SÜSS
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EUGEN KLÖPFER · ALBERT FLORATH · MALTE
JAEGER · THEODOR LOOS · HILDE VON STOLZ
ELSE ELSTER · WALTER WERNER · JACOB TIEDTKE
SPIELLEITUNG: VEIT HARLAN

The 1940 poster of the German propaganda film "Jud Süss"

oppression and persecution against the Jewish population. It serves as a stark example of how the Nazis convinced the

German populace that Jews were the root of their misfortunes and an obstacle to their happiness.

In the second stage, “discrimination,” the Nazis began to implement legal restrictions on Jews. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws were enacted, stripping Jews of their civil rights. They were also dismissed from government services, universities, and the military. Jews were forbidden from practicing certain professions and were excluded from many aspects of public life. They were prohibited from marrying or having sexual relations with “Aryans.”

The Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935

Research conducted by American scientists and sociologists indicated that the German society largely approved the adoption of the Nuremberg Laws. This approval, in turn, contributed to the rise in Hitler's popularity. Extensive propaganda convinced Germans that Jews posed a threat to their well-being. Consequently, Germans increasingly turned to the police, demanding decisive action, believing that their safety and prosperity depended on it.

This case clearly demonstrates how extremist rhetoric can instill ideas of intolerance within a society, making people believe that discrimination is justified and normal.

The final stage, "persecution," began with Nazi officials addressing citizens in a manner such as, "Notice that we have passed laws, but unfortunately, the problem has not been solved. The people who threaten your well-being are still around. Yes, they don't work in the police, they don't work in hospitals, but these people are very cunning. As you understand, they are still dangerous to your well-being." This led to incidents of vigilante justice and attacks on Jews.

Riots became more frequent in ghettos. Germans began to riot and shatter the windows of Jewish shops, sometimes escalating into physical violence. These events are documented in films. Although these acts might appear

spontaneous at first glance, most were orchestrated by the Nazis or special services. Eventually, the Nazis escalated to open repression: In 1938, the pogrom known as “Kristallnacht” (The Night of Broken Glass) occurred, during which synagogues, Jewish shops, and homes were destroyed across Germany and Austria, and thousands of Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps.

Additionally, the Nazis imposed the requirement for Jews to wear yellow stars to distinguish them from others. These stars, sewn onto their clothing, served as markers, turning Jews into targets for persecution.

In Nazi Germany, Jews were required to sew a yellow star onto their clothing

The ultimate result of this process was the Holocaust — the systematic extermination of six million Jews. The Nazi regime built a network of concentration and extermination camps, such as Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Dachau, where Jews were killed en masse in gas chambers, shot, and tortured to death. This horrifying catastrophe stands as a grim testimony to the consequences of employing the “Roman formula.”

Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp

Of course, it may seem that society has always fought against those deemed undesirable. This impression is fostered by the way events of the past are often presented to us — merely as "historically dictated circumstances," under which one group of people begins to exterminate another. These killings are carried out under seemingly righteous pretexts, with active societal support, while the perpetrators believe they are doing a "God's work." Yet, they blatantly violate the fundamental commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." This is how, by knowing human psychology and implementing the ingenious "Roman formula" strategy, all wars are organized and tyrannies are created.

Hegel was right saying, “The only thing that we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history.”

It might seem like a tale from ancient times, but today, anti-cult organizations around the world are using the same methods with alarming precision. It is contemporary anti-cultists who are behind many of today’s global military conflicts and the most heinous terrorist acts. They engage in manipulation and misinformation in the media, spreading fear and stirring up tension within society. By violating citizens’ rights and laws, they discriminate against specific social groups, instigate persecution, undermine the foundations of democracy, and steer nations towards totalitarianism.

Here are some clear examples of how this infallible strategy is being applied in our times.

Let’s start with the “Waco Siege” — an event that permanently altered the US landscape, leading to a series of horrific acts of domestic terrorism, eroding trust in government authorities, and splintering society. As stated in the documentary THE IMPACT, “For anti-cult followers, the Waco case is a benchmark. It was the straw that was supposed to break the back of freedom in America, the fire that, according to their plans, should have sparked the flames of civil war.”

In brief, the Branch Davidians, a group of Seventh-day Adventists, had peacefully resided in Waco for nearly 60 years. But within just a few years, through a disinformation campaign in the media, anti-cultists transformed this group of people practicing their form of Christianity into the image of a "dangerous, destructive cult." Baseless and deceitful accusations led to a horrific tragedy. Think about it: this story ended with the **deaths of 82 peaceful American citizens, including more than 20 children**. This was the result of a **51-day standoff** between US law enforcement agencies and a small religious community[1]. For a more detailed look at all stages of the discrediting campaign and its consequences, you can read this article on our website. What can we say — once again, the "Roman formula" worked flawlessly, setting off irreversible destructive processes in the democratic society of the US. And, as often happened before, the true instigators of this heinous crime remained in the shadows.

This is not a scene from an action movie or war chronicle; it is a photograph from Waco (Mount Carmel Ranch, where the Branch Davidians, a group of Seventh-day Adventists, lived peacefully) after the FBI brought Armageddon there

Another striking and both shocking example of the “Roman formula” is the situation in communist China, where in addition to persecution of believers, Falun Gong followers have been persecuted for 19 years.

Traditional meditative practice of Falun Gong performed outdoors

Falun Gong (Falun Dafa) is a meditative practice based on a series of traditional Qigong breathing and movement exercises that began gaining widespread popularity in China in 1992. By mid-1999, it had attracted an enormous following: over 70 million people were practicing Falun Gong, or at least that's the figures stated by Chinese authorities. Before the onset of the crackdown, nearly one in ten Chinese citizens was reportedly a practitioner of this movement, surpassing the number of Communist Party members. This massive following drew significant attention from the authorities.

Jiang Zemin, then General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, saw the widespread popularity of Falun Gong as a threat to his authoritarian rule. According to US Congress data, hundreds of thousands of Falun Dafa followers

were detained without trial[2]. They were subjected to intensified interrogation methods, including torture, psychological abuse, and forced labor.

In 2006, information surfaced on the internet revealing that not only were Falun Gong practitioners being mass imprisoned in China, but their organs were being forcibly harvested. According to some eyewitness accounts and statements from participants and victims of these brutal acts, organ harvesting was conducted on live individuals, without any anesthesia, and these organs were subsequently used in China's transplant industry. This revelation caused a significant public outcry.

The film *Human Harvest: China's Illegal Organ Trade* garnered widespread attention and went on to win the prestigious Peabody Award[3], an annual international accolade recognizing excellence in radio and television. Additionally, *Human Harvest* was frequently named "Best Documentary" at various international film festivals[4]. The documentary features interviews conducted by director Leon Lee with key figures investigating organ harvesting, including Nobel Peace Prize nominees David Kilgour and David Matas, as well as investigative journalist Ethan Gutmann, alongside persecuted Falun Gong practitioners who had fled China.

In 2013, the European Parliament[5] and, in 2016, the US Congress[6] passed resolutions condemning the forced organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners in China. The international organization "Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting" (DAFOH) petitioned the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to end the forced organ harvesting of prisoners of conscience, specifically Falun Gong practitioners, in China. This petition became the second most signed in the organization's history, with over 2.7 million signatories from more than 50 countries worldwide. However, DAFOH has the following to say about what happened next with the petition:

"*DAFOH announces that as of June 25, 2018, our Board of Directors has decided to end the petition to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights calling for an end to China's forced organ harvesting of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience.*

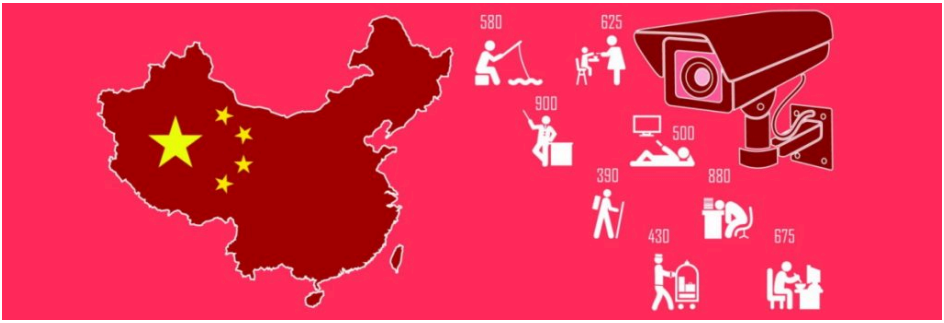
*Twice over the last five years DAFOH representatives have visited the United Nations in Geneva to hand over more than 3 million signatures and to discuss these crimes against humanity. To date, we have not seen verifiable actions taken by the United Nations in response to this petition representing the will of people from all over the world.*

*The inaction of the United Nations with regard to blatant human rights violations around the world, such as China's forced organ harvesting, contributed to the United States' decision to formally quit the United Nations Human Rights Council on the grounds that human rights issues are not being adequately addressed.*[7]"

"Unprecedented Atrocity": Countries Call for Criminal Liability for Forced Organ Harvesting

You might be wondering, "How is such madness possible in the modern world?" This question is thoroughly addressed in the film "The IMPACT," available on our portal.

I believe you now understand why those behind the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) felt it was necessary to so violently demonize and combat the Falun Gong movement. It was a step towards cementing their total control, rooted in fear. The CCP allowed the leak of information about the atrocities committed against Falun Gong practitioners to demonstrate what would happen to dissenters and to showcase their complete impunity. These repressions were followed by an era of total censorship and the creation of the so-called "Great Chinese Firewall," which cut off Chinese citizens' access to the global internet. This measure was ostensibly for the citizens' benefit, to protect them from information that supposedly posed a threat to public safety and the ruling authority, as well as "heretical teachings." This evolved into the social credit system, which, in reality, became a means for the state to exercise total control over its citizens.




Thanks to the world's largest network of surveillance cameras, the social credit rating of citizens is regulated automatically

Thus, the time it took anti-cultists to establish a totalitarian regime in China using the "Roman formula" was less than 20 years. This is roughly the same amount of time it took the Nazis to achieve total control over the population of Germany using this same strategy, as a tool of dehumanization. Centuries pass, but the mechanism remains the same: wherever someone sought to subjugate people and wield absolute power, there always emerged so-called undesirable "cultists," "enemies of the people," "betrayers of the homeland," "separatists," "heretics," and so on.

History repeats itself only if people allow it. We invite you to take a close look at world history, and in any segment of it, you will find traces of the use of the "Roman formula" by anti-cultists. You are welcome to explore detailed historical investigations on this topic on our website.

History can be a great teacher if we study it carefully and have no illusions about coincidental patterns.

This article is based on interviews, lectures, articles, and books by Professor Massimo Introvigne, an Italian sociologist and consultant on intellectual property. He is the founder and managing director of the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR), an international network of scholars studying new religious movements. He is the author of dozens of books and

articles in the field of sociology of religion. He was the main author of the *Enciclopedia delle religioni in Italia* (*Encyclopedia of Religions in Italy*) and a member of the editorial board of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*. From January 5 to December 31, 2011, he served as the "Representative on combating racism, xenophobia, and discrimination with a special focus on discrimination against Christians and members of other religions" for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

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Washington: I don't make the claim lightly that the enemy is reviving Nazism in a new form, nor do I casually compare the methods of the Nazis and anti-cultists.

our shared values, human dignity, and stability of democracy as a whole.

people, including children, was not just a national

Haack were pioneers in the fight against cults and sects after World War

The fact is that

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